

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An electrically-conductive thermal insulator comprising:

an electrically-conductive open-celled metallic foam material having a plurality of cells interspersed throughout the electrically-conductive open-celled metallic foam material; and

a cured thermally-insulating material, said thermally-insulating material substantially coating said electrically-conductive open-celled metallic foam material and substantially filling at least some of said plurality of cells in said electrically-conductive open-celled metallic foam material.

2. (Original) An electrically-conductive thermal insulator as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of cells is substantially interconnected.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) An electrically-conductive thermal insulator as claimed in claim 1, wherein said electrically-conductive open-celled metallic foam material is formed from a plurality of substantially interconnected electrically-conductive ligaments.

5. (Original) An electrically-conductive thermal insulator as claimed in claim 1, wherein said thermally-insulating material is a polymer-based thermally-insulating material.

6. (Original) An electrically-conductive thermal insulator as claimed in claim 5, wherein the polymer-based insulating material is a silicone-based thermally-insulating material.

7. (Original) An electrically-conductive thermal insulator as claimed in claim 5, wherein the polymer-based thermal insulating material has glass microballoons dispersed substantially throughout.

8. (Original) An electrically-conductive thermal insulator as claimed in claim 5, wherein the polymer-based thermal insulating material has ceramic microballoons dispersed substantially throughout.

9. (Withdrawn) A method of forming an electrically-conductive thermal insulator comprising the steps of:

coating an electrically-conductive base material defining a plurality of interconnected cells throughout with a curable thermally-insulating material such that said curable thermally-insulating material substantially coats said electrically-conductive base material and substantially fills at least some of said plurality of cells in said electrically-conductive base material; and then

curing said thermally-insulating material.

10. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 9, further comprising the step of:

prior to coating, forming said electrically-conductive base material into a desired shape.

11. (Withdrawn) A method of forming an electrically-conductive thermal insulator comprising:

interconnecting a plurality of electrically-conductive ligaments such that the plurality of interconnected, electrically-conductive ligaments form a structure defining a plurality of substantially interconnected cells throughout and said plurality of

interconnected electrically-conductive ligaments form a plurality of electrically conductive pathways;

applying a thermally-insulating material to said structure, said thermally-insulating material being curable and having a viscosity when uncured such that said uncured thermally-insulating material substantially coats said structure and substantially flows throughout said structure substantially filling a plurality of said plurality of substantially interconnected cells; and then

curing said thermally-insulating material.